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190439Z Jul 05

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 DHAKA 003412

SIPDIS

FOR MARY ALICE KLEINJAN, ASST. GC FOR ANE

E.O.: 12958: N/A

TAGS: OTRA BG

SUBJECT: COUNTRY CLEARANCE FOR MS. DIANE PERONE'S VISIT

¶1. Embassy Dhaka welcomes MS. Diane Perone on her o/a July 25 to Aug 13, 2005 visit and grants country clearance, contingent repeat contingent on obtaining a Bangladeshi visa in her passport prior to arrival in Bangladesh (see Paragraph 3.D. and 3.E. below). Control Officer will be Bobbie Myers. Contact information: Phone (Office) (88-02)885-5500 Ext. 2303, (Home) (88-02) 885-5595, (FAX) (88-02)882-3648, E-mail address: bmyers@usaid.gov. Ms. Perone's level of security is Top Secret. The purpose of her visit is to provide legal support.

¶2. The Mission's workweek is Sunday-Thursday 0800 hours to 1630 hours.

¶3. **Comments:**

¶A. The traveler is advised to carry a copy of this cable with her for reference.

¶B. Hotel accommodation has been made at the Royal Park Residence, House No. 85, Rod No. 25A, Block-A, Banani, Dhaka. Phone numbers are: (8802) 881-5945-6, Fax (8802)881-5299.

¶C. Embassy expeditor will meet and assist upon arrival at the airport. Arrival o/a July 25 on BA 145 and departure BA 144 o/a Aug 13, 2005. Travelers making more than one connecting flight should consider rechecking their baggage, especially if transferring within the region. Embassy also advises carrying a change of clothes and all important documents in your carry-on bags.

¶D. **IMPORTANT - PLEASE NOTE:** Personnel entering Bangladesh are required to possess a valid passport, with a minimum validity of six months. A valid visa is required prior to arrival. There are no exceptions. Any traveler arriving without a valid visa will be returned to the United States or their country of origin upon the next available flight. Visas are no longer issued upon arrival. Please ensure that your visa is valid for at least six months after your scheduled departure date from Dhaka.

¶E. In special circumstances, Post will arrange for an airport visa upon arrival for persons originating travel to Bangladesh from countries where there is no Bangladesh visa-issuing mission. For an airport visa we require (1) a faxed photocopy of the traveler's passport bio-data page, sent to 880-2-882-4449 at least 7 calendar days in advance; and (2) a statement from the losing post that there is no Bangladesh mission in country. The Embassy will not, repeat, not provide this service to persons originating travel in countries that have a Bangladesh visa-issuing mission. However, we urge all travelers to attempt to obtain a visa prior to traveling to Post.

¶4. **Departure and onward travel:** All departing personnel (including holders of diplomatic and official passports) are urged to reconfirm onward travel and to verify if the departure tax, approximately Taka 300 (approximately USD 5.17) and the travel tax (approximately Taka 2500) have been included in the cost of the ticket. If not included, each traveler will be required to pay the taxes, in Taka only, at the airport.

¶5. **Currency:** The local use of U.S. Dollars (USD) is prohibited by law, except for the payment of a hotel bill. The local currency, the Taka, must be used for all other local transactions. Accommodation exchange is available at the Chancery through the Citibank cashier. The exchange rate fluctuates and is currently approximately Taka 63 to USD 1.00. Reverse accommodation exchange is available only at the original place of exchange with original documents and receipts as proof. Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) are limited and dispense Taka only. Traveler's checks cannot be used in most establishments except international hotels. However, the Citibank at the Chancery will cash traveler checks for Taka only. Most major credit cards are accepted at international hotels.

¶6. **Club and Commissary:**

¶A. The American Recreation Association (known as ARA or "The Club") facility is available to U.S. citizen official visitors for a temporary membership fee of USD 10.00 per week. This can not be pro-rated for a shorter visit. In addition to the membership fee, you will be required to purchase a cash card, USD 10.00 per card or Taka 600.00. A copy of your passport data page

or a passport-sized photograph is necessary to obtain a cash card. This card will enable you to have meals and use club facilities (which include tennis court, squash court, swimming pool, exercise room, and restaurant/bar.)

1B. The U.S. Commissary facility is available to U.S. citizen official visitors who are USG employees. However, payment is permitted only by USD personal check or traveler checks. Cash dollars and local currency payments cannot be accepted. Change will not be provided for transactions using traveler checks. Therefore, smaller denomination traveler checks would be more useful.

17. NOTE: Health - Post cannot emphasize strongly enough that all travelers must have health insurance that will cover medical evacuations by air ambulance. Travelers should carry with them the 24/7 contact information for their insurer. Medical care in Bangladesh is very basic and Post does not recommend that anyone remain hospitalized here.

Intestinal problems are common in Dhaka. Visitors must exercise care in what they eat and drink; food-borne diseases are common. Presume that all tap water is contaminated, even in hotels. Travelers are advised to drink bottled/boiled water and eat only fruits and vegetables that have been cooked and peeled. Undercooked meat should be avoided. Travelers should also avoid eating uncooked dairy products and food sold on the streets. Visitors who take medication on a regular basis should bring enough for the duration of their visit. It is not always possible to find equivalents for American prescriptions on the local market. In general, local medical facilities are substandard. The U.S. Mission has a Medical Unit staffed by a U.S. Physician and registered nurses. Travelers venturing outside Dhaka are advised to use standard anti-malaria prophylaxis, including taking appropriate anti-malarial medication, using mosquito protection and the use of bed netting. It is strongly recommended that all visitors bring a supply of mosquito repellent to Dhaka. There have been cases of mosquito-borne illnesses, including malaria and dengue fever, which is transmitted by a day-biting mosquito. The only effective repellent we are aware of contains DEET (20% DEET is the maximum that is considered safe for children). Supplies are usually available in the commissary; however it is a good idea to have your own supply should you arrive in Dhaka when the commissary is not open. We also recommend that travelers have updated immunizations, especially an up-to-date typhoid immunization (either oral or injectable.)

18. Security: Bangladesh continues to experience some anti-American sentiment as the result of U.S. military and other actions in the war against terrorism, and events in the Middle East. Anti-American demonstrations throughout Bangladesh, which generally occur on Friday afternoons, have the potential to take place any time and to be unruly. In addition, the longstanding confrontation between the two leading political parties has prompted general strikes (hartals), public demonstrations and marches. They can be called on very short notice and can turn violent. Normal vehicular traffic is discouraged during hartals. Visitors should strictly avoid all political protests, demonstrations and marches. They should consider possible security risks in deciding whether to attend other gatherings.

19. The Embassy advises Americans to be aware of their surroundings at all times, to avoid predictable behavior, and not to accept packages from unknown individuals. Sensitive or personal matters should not be discussed over local telephone lines.

110. The State Department has classified the crime threat in Dhaka as high. Foreigners are not generally the target of violent crime. However, pick-pocketing, purse-snatching and other forms of street crime occur frequently, especially in areas frequented by foreigners. Visitors should avoid walking alone after dark, carrying large sums of money, or wearing expensive jewelry. Valuables should be stored in the hotel safety deposit box and should not be left unattended in hotel rooms. Visitors should use the Embassy Motor Pool as the Chief of Mission has declared public transportation to be unsafe. The Regional Security Officer strongly discourages the use of rickshaws, baby taxis, and other public transport. In addition, you should keep the Embassy's 24-hour emergency telephone number available at all times (880-02-885-5500); receptionists are on duty 24 hours a day.

111. Agency specific general information. N/A

112. We look forward to your visit.

Chammas